

**COMMISSIONER MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
February 16, 2026
9:00 AM**

ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS: Andy Beck, President
Tom Helmer, Vice President
Rick Woodall

COUNCIL: Stephanie Campbell, President

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Jim Ensley

AUDITOR'S OFFICE: Kristina Berish

AUDIENCE: 23 Individuals

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on February 16, 2026, at 9:00 AM in regular session. The meeting was held at the Putnam County Courthouse. Beck opened the meeting and the pledge to the flag was given.

Beck made the motion to add custodian to the agenda. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Helmer made the motion to add CivilCon to the agenda. Beck seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

CUSTODIAN - VANDALISM

Head Custodian Cliff Ross informed the board about vandalism that had occurred at the old school property. The two buildings we have were broken into. They stole a push mower and an air compressor. He had reported the robbery.

COURTHOUSE PROPERTY – PINE TREES

Beck asked about thoughts on the pine trees on the courthouse lawn. From the shape they are in, it felt like it was a danger of them coming down. Fellow Commissioners agreed, Woodall made the motion to have Cliff Ross get quotes. Beck seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

BATHROOMS IN THE COURTHOUSE

Beck felt the bathrooms in the annex need to be updated. There is more than one with a step-up, so they are not handicapped accessible. After brief discussion, the board asked Cliff Ross to seek out estimates.

LOAN FOR PURCHASE OF 308 MEDIC WAY PROPERTY

The county had advertised seeking bids for a loan. They received four:

- 1) Tri-Co Bank & Trust – proposal A: 5-year loan, fixed rate 4.47%. Annual payment of \$261,765.21 or proposal B: 10-year loan, 5/1 ARM at 4.87%. Annual payment of \$148,017.83.

- 2) North Salem Bank – 5-year loan, fixed rate 4.55%. Annual payment of \$262,325.49. 10-year loan, at 4.55% rate. Annual payment of \$145,693.15.
- 3) Hoosier Heartland Bank – 5-year loan, fixed rate 6.85%. Annual payment of \$280,090.30. 10-year loan, 6.85%. Annual payment of \$163,350.10.
- 4) First National Bank Cloverdale – 5-year loan, fixed rate 3.90%. Annual payment of \$258,009.75. 10-year loan, at 4.40%. Annual payment of \$145,081.75.

Beck wanted to let the public know the loan payments will be paid from the hazardous waste fund which is tipping fees collected from the landfill. This will not be paid from property tax dollars.

The board were all in agreement that a 5-year fixed rate loan was the best option for the county. They took the bids under advisement and will make their decision at their March 2nd meeting.

PLAN COMMISSION – CELL TOWER

Director Lisa Zeiner stated the legal notice was not published in time by the cell tower company for their meeting so she could not present it today to the board. She asked the Commissioners to table it until April 13th meeting. Woodall made the motion to table rezone cell tower 2025-RZ-087 vertical bridge. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Beck made the motion to have a special meeting on March 16th at 6:00 pm, if needed, topic solar farm. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EMS – HOLIDAY PAY SECTION OF POLICY ADDENDUM

Kelly Russ Director said it has been standard practice for them to receive \$100 holiday stipend. She is requesting them to align their policy with the Sheriff's department. Currently the three 24/7 departments: Sheriff, EMS, and 911, all have different policies on how to handle a holiday.

Ensley advised any policy change would need to be advertised since it is an ordinance to make the amendment. The board could not vote on it today. This is also a topic that should be discussed administratively instead of a regular session meeting.

Woodall made the motion to approve advertising for the policy change, pending seeing the exact change Russ is requesting and the Council approving the additional funds that will be needed. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Auditor stated we need to start having administrative meetings to start working on reviewing the draft of the county's handbook and the departments who have addendums need to submit a rough draft of theirs to be reviewed and updated.

Russ gave an update on ambulances and said that she was on their March 16th agenda for ambulance bids.

2026 DUST BOWL

Marc O'Leary came to the meeting with his annual request approving the ability to hold the race in Putnam County. This year they have 1,400 participants; four different countries will be represented. Date of race: July 25, 2026. Beck made the motion to approve. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Highway Director Clint Maddox wanted O'Leary to be aware that bridge 152 will be having repairs done on it starting this week. It should be done by the race. Bridge 211 is due for replacement. This bridge may not be there anymore, and the race would need to be diverted. He will keep him informed.

SHERIFF RE: AGREEMENT W/ HERITAGE LAKE FOR A RESOURCE OFFICER

Sheriff Baugh brought a contractual agreement with Heritage Lake to have a special deputy position. This would be set up just like the officer at the hospital and South Putnam school. Helmer made the motion to approve. Beck seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

THRIVE

Ryan Keller came to the meeting to give an update on what they do for the community. He also asked for the CY 2026 local match support budget request from the county for \$35,865. This is the same amount they received in 2025.

Woodall asked about the traffic counts they offered. Keller said INDOT dictates some traffic counts but if the county has adjustments or add-ons just let them know.

HIGHWAY REPORT

Director Clint Maddox:

- 1) Oakalla Bridge – had someone look at it to see what can be done to get it opened to traffic. Waiting for the report.
- 2) On call agreement on an hourly basis for 2026 from Kurdziel Barker Engineering, Inc. Woodall made the motion to accept pending Ensley review and approval. Beck seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 3) Bridge 152 – work beginning this week.
- 4) Drove around and looked at several bridges, concrete work. Waiting on pricing.
- 5) Tractor bids – have the rest in. We received several bids. Maddox recommended Bane-Welker \$122,451 for a 2024 Case IH 140A and Bane-Welker \$173,350 for a 2025 Case IH L115 MSL.
- 6) Bridge 45 have several companies reviewing. Waiting for their feedback.
- 7) Woodall felt the county spends a lot of money across the departments to repair vehicles. He would like to see the county create a program for individuals fresh out of automotive school to work for the county. This would give them experience and save the county money.

Woodall said he would investigate what would be the process of creating. Sheriff Baugh said he would be open to having inmates learn a trade and be part of this program.

- 8) Bridge 107 – replacing with a culvert. Removal next week. North end of 675 W in Madison Twp.
- 9) New hire of an administrative assistant due to someone retiring. Starting March 30th. Two months of training prior to current employee retirement. Money in budget.

CIVILCON – BRIDGE 45

Duncan and Miller with CivilCon stopped in since they were in the area looking at bridges for the highway department. They are focusing on bridge 145. This is an interesting and complex project. This bridge is on the county line. It is on a historic list. This bridge is not in a location where you can leave it and bypass. It is cost prohibitive. Beck asked how long it would take to get permits done. Duncan presented a timeline. If they did the work, projecting 645 days, 20 months best case scenario for total project.

MINUTES

February 2, 2026 – Helmer made the motion to approve. Beck seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

February 3, 2026 (executive) – Woodall made the motion to approve. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MAIL

The Commissioners acknowledged their mail.

2026 EDIT PLAN

Alicia Gregg, care coordinator, came to the meeting to give an introduction of what the Isaiah 117 home does for the community.

The board went over what organizations they wanted to include in the plan:

Thrive	35,865
Economic Development	60K
Senior Citizens Center	25K
Edgelea annual payment bond	\$32,216.25
Edgelea Debt	0
Rural Transit	40K
Beyond Homeless	40K
Food Pantry	25K
Isaiah 117	15K
Peoples Pathways	20K
Adult Education	40K
Mental Health Association	14K

Redevelopment Commission (TIF)	40K start-up
Highway for roads, equipment, and bridges	1M
Warchest	<u>161,619.75</u>
Grand Total:	\$1,547,701

Roachdale Town (sewer project) maybe come back and address from the warchest at a later date. They do not have a dollar amount yet in their request to the county.

Woodall made the motion to approve and have the Auditor submit it to the Council for review and approval. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Kristin Clary submitted contract for professional services with the county for the Greencastle Putnam County Economic Development.

TOWN OF RUSSELLVILLE – TORNADO SIREN

The board was approached regarding the \$10,000 the county had approved to help purchase a tornado siren last year. Apparently previous administration from the town had not followed through on submitting claim for payment. Now the cost of the siren has increased. Commissioners advised them to go to the Auditor’s office to submit the proper documentation to receive payment of the agreed upon \$10,000.

TRUSTEES

Beck would like to have a meeting with the trustees to discuss possible law changes. March 10th at 6 pm.

LUNCH

Beck said a few people have complained about the offices being closed for lunch (noon to 1 pm). They were trying to make a payment in the Clerk’s office during their lunch hour. Berish said she felt it should be weighed against how many constituents do we have in the county and have received just a few complaints. Most if not all departments offer ability to pay without an individual even needing to come to the courthouse.

Ensley reminded the board that at least half of the courthouse has been closed for lunch (noon to 1 pm) for many years. It was only this past year that the rest of the offices started closing as well. The board could dictate the offices they are over, but the elected offices can remain closed if they choose.

ADJOURN

Woodall made the motion to adjourn. Helmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.



Andy Beck, President



Tom Helmer, Vice President



Rick Woodall



Attest: Auditor's Office

Kristina Berish